

TRIBUNE SUPPLEMENT

FREELAND, PA., JUNE 4, 1891.

SOME NEW LAWS.

Part of the Work Done at Harrisburg By the Dead Legislature.

There were 414 bills passed by the recent Legislature, but very few of them are of general benefit. The most important reforms asked for were thrown aside by orders of the Republican and corporation people, who held a powerful influence over both Houses, but more so in the Senate than in the lower branch. Every measure looking toward the relief of the laboring and farming elements was defeated or amended antagonistically in the Senate. A synopsis of the most important bills follow:

BALLOT REFORM.

The Ballot reform bill was amended by a conference committee of both branches of the Legislature, and passed finally by that body on Thursday morning. It is far from being perfect ballot reform and has many disadvantages, but it is as much as could be expected from a Legislature controlled by the Republican machine.

The bill does not go into effect until March 1, 1892. It provides for an official ballot to be printed and distributed by the County Commissioners. A political party which polled three per cent. of the largest entire vote cast for any office in the State at the preceding general election will be entitled to have its nominations printed on the official ballot for both State and local elections. New parties, or old ones which do not poll three per cent. of the vote, and independent nominations can receive recognition on the official ballot by filing what are called "nomination papers."

The number of signatures required for these papers is as follows: For State officers one-half of one per cent. of the largest vote for any officer elected in the State at the preceding election, or about 2900 signatures; for district, county, ward or township nominations 3 per cent. of the largest entire vote for any officer elected in that district at the last preceding election. Party nominations must be sworn to by the convention officers, and nomination papers must be sworn to by five of the signers.

A standard time is fixed within which all nominations must be filed, as follows: For State, Congressional, Representative, Senatorial and Judicial nominations, fifty-six days before election for party candidates and forty-nine days before election for independent nominations; for city and county nominations, forty-two and thirty-five days before election; and for borough and township officers and election officers and school directors in the same, ten and seven days respectively. The County Commissioners and township auditors will decide upon the validity of nominations. Those invalid cannot be printed on the official ballot.

It is provided that in designating the party policy of independent nominations no words shall be used "identical with or similar to the words used for a like purpose" on party nominations. It is thought this would prohibit the use of "Independent Republican" and Independent Democrat."

In printing the ballots party nominations will be arranged in groups, all the Democrats being kept together and all the Republicans being kept together. But Prohibitionists and Independents will be arranged in the alphabetical order of candidates' names for each office. A cross mark (X) placed after the word "Republican" or "Democrat" at the head of the party nominations will indicate a vote for every candi-

date on the party ticket, but for independents the voter must indicate with a cross mark (X) each candidate he votes for.

The machinery for carrying the law into effect is similar to that of all other States which have the Australian system. Booths, rallying, voting in an open room, are all provided for. The count is conducted in the presence of the party watchers.

The disability feature is very loosely drawn. It provides that any voter who shall declare to the election judge that by reason of disability he desires assistance in the preparation of his ballot the voter may select a qualified voter of the district to accompany him into the booth.

CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION.

The constitutional convention bill provides first that the people shall decide next November whether they desire a convention. At the same time they will vote for delegates, and if the convention is to be held these delegates will serve. The convention will consist of 177 delegates, of which 27 will be elected at large and 150 by Senatorial districts. A voter can only vote for 18 delegates at large and two district delegates. This would give the Republicans 111 members of the convention and the Democrats 66, basing the result on the present political complexion of the districts. Compensation of members is fixed at \$1500 with mileage and postage. The convention will meet in Harrisburg on the first Tuesday in December, and no limitation is put upon its work. It can frame an entire new constitution.

REVENUE LAW.

The Boyer revenue bill is expected to increase the State's revenues about \$3,000,000 a year. It increases the personal property tax from 3 mills to 4 mills, increases the tax on omnibuses from 3 mills to 4, increases the tax on capital stock of corporations from 3 mills to 5 mills, and changes the method of computing the tax from the dividend basis to the actual value-basis. This change of system will in itself greatly increase the revenue. It will return to the counties three-fourths of the personal property tax collected from such counties instead of one-third, as at present. The tax on bank stock is increased from 6 to 8 mills for such institutions as elect to pay State taxes in lieu of local taxes. Banks that do not so elect will pay 4 mills on the actual value of their stock.

REGISTRATION.

The new registration law strikes at the root of ballot-box stuffing and repeating, as it will prevent padded assessors' lists. In the first place, an assessor will be required to make an original canvass instead of taking the list of the previous year and attempting to correct it. As a matter of fact many assessors never struck off the names of persons who had died or moved away, and it was thus possible for repeaters to vote upon these false names. A second precaution is to require assessors to arrange the names upon the list that is exposed for public inspection at the polling places according to street numbers. Thus it can be seen at a glance where colonization is attempted. The assessments will be made in May and December, with opportunity for changes of residence to be corrected in September.

LIQUOR LEGISLATION.

A measure, known as the Brooks wholesale liquor bill, provides that the license fee in first and second-class cities shall be \$1000, in third-class cities \$500, in other cities \$300, in boroughs \$200, and in townships \$100. This relates only to wholesale. The money will go to the State. Delivery-wagons must be plainly marked with

the name of the dealer. Distillers and manufacturers must not sell less than one gallon of spirituous liquor; wholesale dealers and storekeepers must not sell less than one quart spiritous, or malt liquors less than twelve 1/2 pint bottles. Brewers or distillers need not show the necessity for their places of business. The Court must hear evidence for and against an applicant, and has discretion as to whether the license is necessary for the accommodation of the public and as to the character of the applicant.

Among the other bills passed finally were the following, some of which may be of local interest:

Making Saturday afternoon, from June 15 to September 15, a legal half holiday. It is optional with banks whether they shall close at noon, that question being left to their directors. Notes or drafts falling due on Saturday cannot be protested until the next business day if not paid before noon of Saturday.

Making an appropriation for the expenses of the Factory Inspectors for the years 1890 and 1891, which was overlooked by the last Legislature.

An act providing for the appointment of a commission consisting of eight miners, three operators, three mining engineers and two inspectors, to revise the anthracite mine and ventilation laws.

Supplementary to the act to prevent vexatious attachments by providing that a counsel fee of at least \$10 shall be taxed as part of the costs which the defendant shall be entitled to recover from a plaintiff whose action shall have been discontinued because brought for the purpose of annoying a defendant.

Permitting all soldiers who cannot obtain a livelihood otherwise to peddle by procuring a license for which no fee shall be charged.

To authorize boroughs to manufacture electricity for commercial purposes.

Providing that sheriff's sales may be advertised in newspapers printed in the German language.

Authorizing the assessment of an annual poor tax upon unaturalized persons.

Amending the borough tax system so that taxes can be levied for electric lights.

Appropriating \$300,000 for the Columbian World's Fair, and authorizing a Commission of thirty persons to be appointed by the Governor to manage Pennsylvania's exhibit.

Providing that the law of 1830 against horse racing shall not apply to horses used in trotting by regularly organized associations.

Providing for a uniform form of contract or policy of fire insurance for all companies taking fire risks within the Commonwealth. Under its provisions all fire policies will be alike in form, conditions and exemptions allowed insurers.

Amending the law of June 1, 1883, allowing liens for wages so that clerks and laborers of all kinds shall have preferred claim against insolvent debtors. Such claims can only cover six months services.

Amending the act prescribing the manner in which municipalities may arrange for an increase of their indebtedness.

Requiring children between the ages of 8 and 12 years to attend a public, parochial or private school for at least sixteen weeks a year. Failure to comply with the law is punishable by a fine of \$5.

To prevent persons from unlawfully wearing the insignia of the Loyal Legion and badges of the Grand Army and the shield of the Veteran Union Legion.